

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A differential limiting control apparatus for a vehicle comprising:

[[an]] a clutch unit interposed between one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft for variably transmitting a driving force between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft;

a target differential speed setting unit for setting a target differential speed between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft[[],];

an actual differential speed detecting unit for detecting an actual differential speed between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft[[],]; and

a clutch torque computing unit for computing an engagement force of the clutch unit by obtaining a deviation between the target differential speed and the actual differential speed, configuring a switching function by using at least a polarity related to an integral term of the deviation, and applying a sliding mode control.

2. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the switching function configured at the clutch torque computing unit is such as to result from adding a value obtained by multiplying a differential term of the deviation between the target differential speed and the actual differential speed by a predetermined gain to a value obtained by multiplying a value of the polarity by a predetermined gain.

3. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the clutch torque computing unit computes a final engagement force of the clutch unit by adding a value obtained by multiplying a proportional term of the deviation between the target differential speed and the actual differential speed by a predetermined gain to an engagement force of the clutch unit computed through the sliding mode control.

4. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 2, wherein the clutch torque computing unit computes a final engagement force of the clutch unit by adding a value obtained by multiplying a proportional term of the deviation between the target differential speed and the actual differential speed by a predetermined gain to an engagement force of the clutch unit computed through the sliding mode control.

5. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 1,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is interposed between a front and a rear axles, wherein the target differential speed setting unit sets a target differential speed at least either one of between the front and rear axles, a left front wheel and a right front wheel, or a left rear wheel and a right rear wheel, wherein the actual differential speed detecting unit detects an actual differential speed at least either one of between the front and rear axles, the left front wheel and the right front wheel, or the left rear wheel and the right rear wheel which corresponds to the target differential speed setting unit, and wherein the clutch torque computing unit computes an engagement force of the clutch unit using a deviation between a target differential speed set at the target differential speed setting unit and an actual differential speed detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit.

6. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 2,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is interposed between a front and a rear axles, wherein the target differential speed setting unit sets a target differential speed at least either one of between the front and rear axles, a left front wheel and a right front wheel, or a left rear wheel and a right rear wheel, wherein the actual differential speed detecting unit detects an actual differential speed at least either one of between the front and rear axles, the left front wheel and the right front wheel, or the left rear wheel and the right rear wheel which corresponds to the target differential speed setting unit, and wherein the clutch torque computing unit computes an

engagement force of the clutch unit using a deviation between a target differential speed set at the target differential speed setting unit and an actual differential speed detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit.

7. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 1,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is clutch unit for limiting a differential motion of a differential interposed between left and right wheels, the target differential speed setting unit sets a target differential speed between the left and right wheels, the actual differential speed detecting unit detects an actual differential speed between the left and right wheels, and the clutch torque computing unit computes an engagement force of the clutch unit using a deviation between a target differential speed set at the target differential speed setting unit and an actual differential speed detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit.

8. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 2,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is clutch unit for limiting a differential motion of a differential interposed between left and right wheels, the target differential speed setting unit sets a target differential speed between the left and right wheels, the actual differential speed detecting unit detects an actual differential speed between the left and right wheels, and the clutch torque computing unit computes an engagement force of the clutch unit using a deviation between a target differential speed set at the target differential speed setting unit and an actual differential speed detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit.

9. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 1,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is interposed between a front and a rear axles, the target differential speed setting unit sets target differential speeds at least a plurality of between the

front and rear axles, a left front wheel and a right front wheel, and a left rear wheel and a right rear wheel, the actual differential speed detecting unit detects actual differential speeds at least a plurality of between the front and rear axles, the left front wheel and the right front wheel, and the left rear wheel and the right rear wheel which correspond to the target differential speed setting unit, and the clutch torque computing unit computes a plurality of engagement forces of the clutch unit using target differential speeds set at the target differential speed setting unit and actual differential speeds detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit and computes one of the plurality of engagement forces of the clutch unit which has a maximum value as a final engagement force of the clutch unit.

10. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 2,

wherein[[;]] the clutch unit is interposed between a front and a rear axles, the target differential speed setting unit sets target differential speeds at least a plurality of between the front and rear axles, a left front wheel and a right front wheel, and a left rear wheel and a right rear wheel, the actual differential speed detecting unit detects actual differential speeds at least a plurality of between the front and rear axles, the left front wheel and the right front wheel, and the left rear wheel and the right rear wheel which correspond to the target differential speed setting unit, and the clutch torque computing unit computes a plurality of engagement forces of the clutch unit using target differential speeds set at the target differential speed setting unit and actual differential speeds detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit and computes one of the plurality of engagement forces of the clutch unit which has a maximum value as a final engagement force of the clutch unit.

11. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the target differential speed setting unit sets in advance a lower limit value of the actual differential speed according to at least one of a vehicle speed, a lateral acceleration and an input

torque inputted into the clutch unit and sets the target differential speed based on the lower limit value so set.

12. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 2, wherein the target differential speed setting unit sets in advance a lower limit value of the actual differential speed according to at least one of a vehicle speed, a lateral acceleration and an input torque inputted into the clutch unit and sets the target differential speed based on the lower limit value so set.

13. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the target differential speed setting unit selectively alter the target differential value that is set thereby.

14. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 2, wherein the target differential speed setting unit selectively alter the target differential value that is set thereby.

15. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the clutch torque computing unit leaves an engagement force of the clutch unit a preset value at least either one of when brakes are applied or when an antilock braking system is in operation.

16. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 2, wherein the clutch torque computing unit leaves an engagement force of the clutch unit a preset value at least either one of when brakes are applied or when an antilock braking system is in operation.

17. (Original) A differential limiting control apparatus for a vehicle comprising:
a clutch unit interposed between one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft for variably transmitting a driving force between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft;

a target differential speed setting unit for setting a target differential speed between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft;

an actual differential speed detecting unit for detecting an actual differential speed between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft; and

a clutch torque computing unit for computing an engagement force of the clutch unit by configuring a switching function having a term where a value of a polarity computed using an integral term based on at least a deviation between the target differential speed and the actual differential speed is multiplied by a predetermined gain and using a sliding mode control where when the switching function takes a positive value, the value of the switching function is used as a control value.

18. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 17, wherein the switching function configured at the clutch torque computing unit is such as to result from adding a value obtained by multiplying a differential term of the deviation between the target differential speed and the actual differential speed by a predetermined gain to a value obtained by multiplying a value of the polarity by a predetermined gain.

19. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 17, wherein the clutch torque computing unit computes a final engagement force of the clutch unit by adding an engagement force of the clutch unit computed through a proportional control based on the target differential speed and the actual differential speed to an engagement force of the clutch unit computed through the sliding mode control.

20. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 18, wherein the clutch torque computing unit computes a final engagement force of the clutch unit by adding an engagement force of the clutch unit computed through a proportional control based on the target differential speed and the actual differential speed to an engagement force of the clutch unit computed through the sliding mode control.

21. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 17,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is interposed between a front and a rear axles, wherein the target differential speed setting unit sets a target differential speed at least either one of between the front and rear axles, a left front wheel and a right front wheel, or a left rear wheel and a right rear wheel, wherein the actual differential speed detecting unit detects an actual differential speed at least either one of between the front and rear axles, the left front wheel and the right front wheel, or the left rear wheel and the right rear wheel which corresponds to the target differential speed setting unit, and wherein the clutch torque computing unit computes an engagement force of the clutch unit using a deviation between a target differential speed set at the target differential speed setting unit and an actual differential speed detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit.

22. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 18,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is interposed between a front and a rear axles, wherein the target differential speed setting unit sets a target differential speed at least either one of between the front and rear axles, a left front wheel and a right front wheel, or a left rear wheel and a right rear wheel, wherein the actual differential speed detecting unit detects an actual differential speed at least either one of between the front and rear axles, the left front wheel and the right front wheel, or the left rear wheel and the right rear wheel which corresponds to the target differential speed setting unit, and wherein the clutch torque computing unit computes an

engagement force of the clutch unit using a deviation between a target differential speed set at the target differential speed setting unit and an actual differential speed detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit.

23. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 17,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is clutch unit for limiting a differential motion of a differential interposed between left and right wheels, the target differential speed setting unit sets a target differential speed between the left and right wheels, the actual differential speed detecting unit detects an actual differential speed between the left and right wheels, and the clutch torque computing unit computes an engagement force of the clutch unit using a deviation between a target differential speed set at the target differential speed setting unit and an actual differential speed detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit.

24. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 18,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is clutch unit for limiting a differential motion of a differential interposed between left and right wheels, the target differential speed setting unit sets a target differential speed between the left and right wheels, the actual differential speed detecting unit detects an actual differential speed between the left and right wheels, and the clutch torque computing unit computes an engagement force of the clutch unit using a deviation between a target differential speed set at the target differential speed setting unit and an actual differential speed detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit.

25. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 17,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is interposed between a front and a rear axles, the target differential speed setting unit sets target differential speeds at least a plurality of between the

front and rear axles, a left front wheel and a right front wheel, and a left rear wheel and a right rear wheel, the actual differential speed detecting unit detects actual differential speeds at least a plurality of between the front and rear axles, the left front wheel and the right front wheel, and the left rear wheel and the right rear wheel which correspond to the target differential speed setting unit, and the clutch torque computing unit computes a plurality of engagement forces of the clutch unit using target differential speeds set at the target differential speed setting unit and actual differential speeds detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit and computes one of the plurality of engagement forces of the clutch unit which has a maximum value as a final engagement force of the clutch unit.

26. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 18,

wherein[[;]] the clutch unit is interposed between a front and a rear axles, the target differential speed setting unit sets target differential speeds at least a plurality of between the front and rear axles, a left front wheel and a right front wheel, and a left rear wheel and a right rear wheel, the actual differential speed detecting unit detects actual differential speeds at least a plurality of between the front and rear axles, the left front wheel and the right front wheel, and the left rear wheel and the right rear wheel which correspond to the target differential speed setting unit, and the clutch torque computing unit computes a plurality of engagement forces of the clutch unit using target differential speeds set at the target differential speed setting unit and actual differential speeds detected at the actual differential speed detecting unit and computes one of the plurality of engagement forces of the clutch unit which has a maximum value as a final engagement force of the clutch unit.

27. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 17, wherein the target differential speed setting unit sets in advance a lower limit value of the actual differential speed according to at least one of a vehicle speed, a lateral acceleration and an input

torque inputted into the clutch unit and sets the target differential speed based on the lower limit value so set.

28. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 18, wherein the target differential speed setting unit sets in advance a lower limit value of the actual differential speed according to at least one of a vehicle speed, a lateral acceleration and an input torque inputted into the clutch unit and sets the target differential speed based on the lower limit value so set.

29. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 17, wherein the target differential speed setting unit selectively alter the target differential value that is set thereby.

30. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 18, wherein the target differential speed setting unit selectively alter the target differential value that is set thereby.

31. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 17, wherein the clutch torque computing unit leaves an engagement force of the clutch unit a preset value at least either one of when brakes are applied or when an antilock braking system is in operation.

32. (Original) The differential limiting control apparatus as set forth in claim 18, wherein the clutch torque computing unit leaves an engagement force of the clutch unit a preset value at least either one of when brakes are applied or when an antilock braking system is in operation.

33. (Original) A differential limiting control method for a vehicle having clutch unit interposed between one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft for variably transmitting a driving force between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft, comprising steps of:

setting a target differential speed between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft,

detecting an actual differential speed between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft, and

computing an engagement force of the clutch unit by obtaining a deviation between the target differential speed and the actual differential speed, configuring a switching function by using at least a polarity related to an integral term of the deviation, and applying a sliding mode control.

34. (Original) The differential limiting control method as set forth in claim 33, wherein the switching function configured at the clutch torque computing step is such as to result from adding a value obtained by multiplying a differential term of the deviation between the target differential speed and the actual differential speed by a predetermined gain to a value obtained by multiplying a value of the polarity by a predetermined gain.

35. (Original) The differential limiting control method as set forth in claim 33, wherein the clutch torque computing step computes a final engagement force of the clutch unit by adding a value obtained by multiplying a proportional term of the deviation between the target differential speed and the actual differential speed by a predetermined gain to an engagement force of the clutch unit computed through the sliding mode control.

36. (Original) A differential limiting control method for a vehicle having clutch unit interposed between one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft for variably transmitting a driving force between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft, comprising steps of:

setting a target differential speed between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft,

detecting an actual differential speed between the one rotational shaft and the other rotational shaft, and

computing an engagement force of the clutch unit by configuring a switching function having a term where a value of a polarity computed using an integral term based on at least a deviation between the target differential speed and the actual differential speed is multiplied by a predetermined gain and using a sliding mode control where when the switching function takes a positive value, the value of the switching function is used as a control value.

37. (Original) The differential limiting control method as set forth in claim 36, wherein the switching function configured at the clutch torque computing step is such as to result from adding a value obtained by multiplying a differential term of the deviation between the target differential speed and the actual differential speed by a predetermined gain to a value obtained by multiplying a value of the polarity by a predetermined gain.

38. (Original) The differential limiting control method as set forth in claim 36, wherein the clutch torque computing step computes a final engagement force of the clutch unit by adding an engagement force of the clutch unit computed through a proportional control based on the target differential speed and the actual differential speed to an engagement force of the clutch unit computed through the sliding mode control.

39. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control method as set forth in claim 33,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is interposed between a front and a rear axles, wherein the target differential speed setting step sets a target differential speed at least either one of between the front and rear axles, a left front wheel and a right front wheel, or a left rear wheel and a right rear wheel, wherein the actual differential speed detecting step detects an actual differential

speed at least either one of between the front and rear axles, the left front wheel and the right front wheel, or the left rear wheel and the right rear wheel which corresponds to the target differential speed setting step, and wherein the clutch torque computing step computes an engagement force of the clutch unit using a deviation between a target differential speed set at the target differential speed setting step and an actual differential speed detected at the actual differential speed detecting step.

40. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control method as set forth in claim 33,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is clutch unit for limiting a differential motion of a differential interposed between left and right wheels, the target differential speed setting step sets a target differential speed between the left and right wheels, the actual differential speed detecting step detects an actual differential speed between the left and right wheels, and the clutch torque computing step computes an engagement force of the clutch unit using a deviation between a target differential speed set at the target differential speed setting step and an actual differential speed detected at the actual differential speed detecting step.

41. (Currently Amended) The differential limiting control method as set forth in claim 33,

wherein[[:]] the clutch unit is interposed between a front and a rear axles, the target differential speed setting step sets target differential speeds at least a plurality of between the front and rear axles, a left front wheel and a right front wheel, and a left rear wheel and a right rear wheel, the actual differential speed detecting step detects actual differential speeds at least a plurality of between the front and rear axles, the left front wheel and the right front wheel, and the left rear wheel and the right rear wheel which correspond to the target differential speed setting step, and the clutch torque computing step computes a plurality of engagement forces of the clutch unit using target differential speeds set at the target differential speed setting step and actual differential speeds detected at the actual differential speed detecting step and computes

one of the plurality of engagement forces of the clutch unit which has a maximum value as a final engagement force of the clutch unit.

42. (Original) The differential limiting control method as set forth in claim 33, wherein the target differential speed setting step sets in advance a lower limit value of the actual differential speed according to at least one of a vehicle speed, a lateral acceleration and an input torque inputted into the clutch unit and sets the target differential speed based on the lower limit value so set.

43. (Original) The differential limiting control method as set forth in claim 33, wherein the target differential speed setting step selectively alter the target differential value that is set thereby.

44. (Original) The differential limiting control method as set forth in claim 33, wherein the clutch torque computing step leaves an engagement force of the clutch unit a preset value at least either one of when brakes are applied or when an antilock braking system is in operation.